

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 30-33 as shown below in the detailed listing of all claims which are, or were, in this application:

1. (Previously presented) A method for preparing a controllably biodegradable silica fibre by spinning the fibre from a silica sol, comprising adjusting a biodegradation rate of the fibre by controlling a viscosity of the spinning solution wherefrom the fibre is spun for determining the starting point of the spinning process, wherein a viscosity of the silica sol at the starting point of the spinning process is from about 1000 to below 100,000 mPas.

2. (Canceled).

3. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 1 wherein the viscosity of the silica sol at the starting point of the spinning process is from about 1 000 to about 50 000 mPas.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 3 wherein the viscosity of the silica sol at the starting point of the spinning process is from about 2 000 to about 15 000 mPas.

5. (Previously presented) A method for preparing a controllably biodegradable fibre by spinning the fibre from a spinning sol comprising adjusting a biodegradation rate of the fibre by controlling a viscosity of the spinning solution wherefrom the fibre is spun, wherein the fibre is spun from a spinning sol having a viscosity from about 1 000 to below 100 000 mPas.

6. (Original) The method according to claim 5 wherein the viscosity of the spinning sol is from about 1 000 to about 50 000 mPas.

7. (Original) The method according to claim 6 wherein the viscosity of the spinning sol is from about 2 000 to about 15 000 mPas.

Claims 8-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) A method for adjusting a biodegradation rate of a silica fibre spun from a silica sol, wherein the method comprises adjusting the biodegradation rate by controlling the viscosity of the spinning sol wherefrom the fibre is spun, wherein a viscosity of the spinning sol is from about 1 000 to below 100 000 mPas.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 16 wherein the viscosity of the spinning sol is from about 1 000 to about 50 000 mPas.

19. (Original) The method according to claim 18 wherein the viscosity of the spinning sol is from about 2 000 to about 15 000 mPas.

20. (Previously presented) A method for adjusting a biodegradation rate of a silica fibre spun from a silica sol, wherein the method comprises adjusting the biodegradation rate by controlling the viscosity of the silica sol wherefrom the fibre is spun at the starting point of the spinning process.

21. (Original) The method according to claim 20 wherein the viscosity of the silica sol at the starting point of the spinning process is below 100 000 mPas.

22. (Original) The method according to claim 21 wherein the viscosity of the silica sol at the starting point of the spinning process is from about 1 000 to about 50 000 mPas.

23. (Original) The method according to claim 22 wherein the viscosity of the silica sol at the starting point of the spinning process is from about 2 000 to about 15 000 mPas.

24. (Previously presented) A delivery device comprising the controllably biodegradable fibre according to claim 30, wherein the fibre contains a biologically active agent.

25. (Original) The delivery device according to claim 24, wherein said biologically active agent is a medicine, a protein, a hormone, a living or dead cell, a bacteria, a virus or a part thereof.

26. (Original) The delivery device according to claim 25, wherein said biologically active agent is a medicine.

27. (Previously presented) A pharmaceutical preparation comprising a delivery device according to claim 24.

28. (Previously presented) A method for administering a biologically active agent to a human or animal, wherein said method comprises implanting, injecting or mucosally attaching a delivery device, wherein said delivery device comprises a controllably

biodegradable fibre according to claim 30 and wherein the fibre comprises a biologically active agent.

29. (Original) The method according to claim 28, wherein the biologically active agent is administered into a mammal.

30. (Currently amended) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre spun from silica sol, a biodegradation rate of said fibre being adjusted by controlling the starting point of the spinning process by a viscosity of the silica sol wherefrom the fibre is spun, the solubility of the fibre in simulated body fluid being ~~0.02~~ 0.2 to 20 wt-%/h.

31. (Currently amended) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre according to claim 30, the solubility of the fibre in simulated body fluid being ~~0.02~~ 0.2 to 8.5 wt-%/h.

32. (Currently amended) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre spun from a silica sol, a biodegradation rate of the fibre being adjusted by controlling the viscosity of the spinning sol wherefrom the fibre is spun, the solubility of the fibre in simulated body fluid being ~~0.02~~ 0.2 to 20 wt-%/h.

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

PATENT

33. (Currently amended) A controllably biodegradable silica fibre according to claim 32, the solubility of the fibre in simulated body fluid being ~~0.02~~ 0.2 to 8.5 wt-%/h.